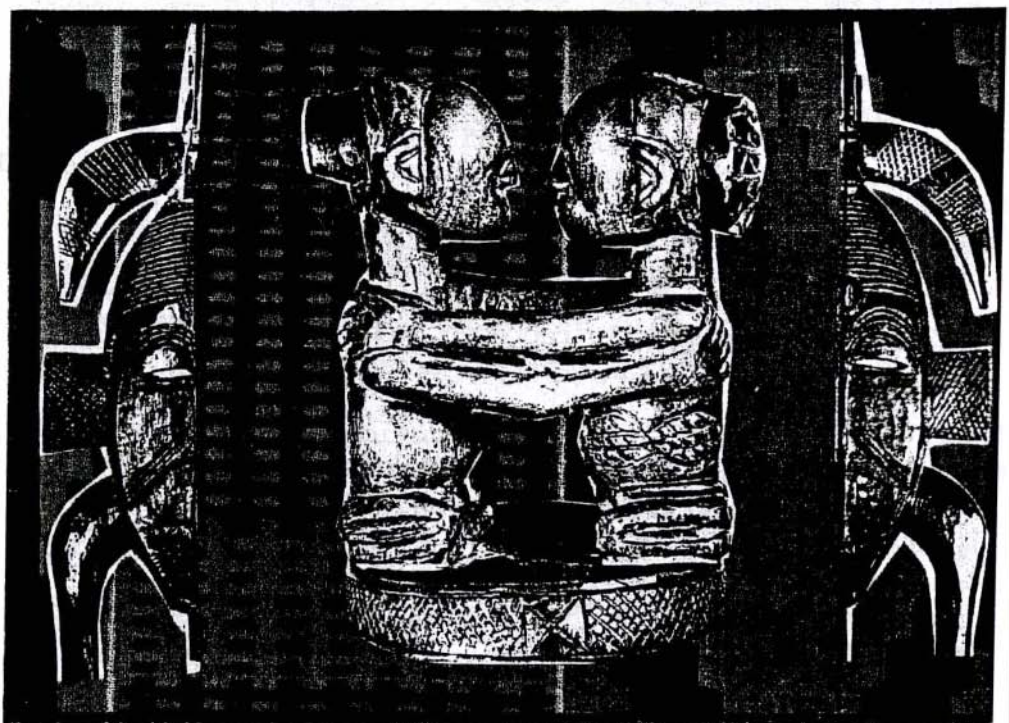
HARAMBEE FLAME

VOLUME XXVII No. 8 August 2006



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EDITORIAL POLICY

The HARAMBEE FLAME is the monthly newsletter of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization(Nebraska State Pen chapter). Ours is a pan-Africanist publication, meaning that we view all people of African descent as one African people, having certain basic interests in common. Also, the HARAMBEE FLAME attempts to be Africentric, in that, through study of the history, cultures, and traditional values of African people, we seek to have and cultivate an African way of looking at things.

The main purposes of the HARAMBEE FLAME are to stimulate and inform. We list "stimulate" first because, more than anything else, we want our readers to be moved to question their/your own ideas, lives, and the circumstances in which we live and to challenge those things that must be challenged in order for us to move from a condition of mental and spiritual servitude and physical dependence upon Caucasian institutions to a state of collective self-determination. Toward this purpose, we present commentaries, poems, etc. These do not necessarily represent the official positions of the Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization.

The HARAMBEE FLAME provides information because wise people want to know what's going on and because certain kinds of information can stimulate the mind, inspire people to want to act, and influence them to pursue proper understanding so that the actions they take will be as effective as possible. The main vehicle we use to provide information is our "From Other Sources" feature in which we make an effort to provide news about the problems we African people are confronted by and the steps we are taking to resolve them. In this feature, we try to provide coverage of the activities of African people and developments affecting us in the U.S., the nations of Africa, and elsewhere. In "Commentary," we offer analysis of and views about current events and developments.

We encourage you to send your comments, essays, poems, etc. to HARAMBEE FLAME; Harambee Afrikan Cultural Organization; P.O. Box 2500; Lincoln, NE.; 68542-2500.

COMMENTARY

Moving Africanism from the Abstract to the Concrete

There is a saying that goes: "We are Africans, not because we were born in Africa, but because Africa was born in us." At its most basic, this saying means that we don't have to be born in Africa in order to be African, that the genetic material of ancestors from Africa makes us African. Of course in one sense, if having genetic material(dna) from African ancestors determines that we are Africans, all human beings can be said to be Africans. Evidence from the sciences of genetics and anthropology give solid support for a belief in the African origin of the human race.

But when we say that we are Africans because Africa was born in us, we begin by looking at our physical characteristics: our skin color, the shapes of our noses, our hair color and texture, etc. We know that indigenous Africans have from very dark to somewhat light brown skin; have noses, more often than not, that are flatter and broader than those of Europeans(Caucasians) or Asians; have black hair and, generally, hair that is of wooly texture; have brown eyes; and have other visible characteristics that tend to distinguish them from Europeans, Asians, and other so-called "racial" groups.

When we who are Africans of U.S. birth(so-called "African-Americans" or "New Afrikans") say that we are Africans, we are expressing pride in our African ancestry and unity with other African people around the world. We are expressing a feeling of kinship with people who "look like us" and share a history with us.

If we are Africans born here in the U.S., and especially if our families go back at least a couple of generations, it is not an easy thing for us to arrive at a place of thought and feeling where we see ourselves as African and as a part of a world-wide African family. Most of what is our experience in

this country stands in the way of this. The U.S. public school system and the commercial media, as well as the other major institutions in this country that are in the indoctrination business, put the idea into our heads that we are "Americans." At the same time, they do just about everything possible to keep us intellectually and emotionally estranged from the African continent.

The school system, for example, puts into our heads the idea that Africa is the "dark continent," void of any historical significance. The news media feed us full with images of Africa as a place of perpetual suffering and death--suffering and death by war, by famine, and by disease. So, for most of us, the last thing in the world we would want to be is "African." When and if we are able to break through this anti-African propaganda, through independent study and counsel from Africans who have already broken through, it is a powerful "moment" for us. We want to embrace all kinds of Africans--especially, Africans from the continent.

But it is too frequently the case that we see Africans who have come here from the continent--be they exchange students, refugees, whatever--and presume that these are Africans who truly think of themselves as African, are knowledgable about African history and cultures, etc. But we are often disappointed. Sometimes we discover that a sister or brother from the continent knows less about the African continent and its history and cultures than we do. We say to ourselves, "How can this be?!" But the very fact that we can be caught off-guard like this is strong evidence that we don't know as much as we think we do.

As much as we may believe in a common bond between ourselves and Africans who are here from the Mother Land, we too often forget that the bond doesn't end with the blood. It includes commonalities of history. After the Middle Passage began, the history of African people changed from one river to streams of history. But these streams were, in many ways, parallel. With regard to our relationships to Europeans and their institutions, there were events

and developments that we experienced here which were very similar to those experienced by Africans in Africa and in other parts of the world. Just as we were subjected to systematic acts of barbarity and debasement through the institution of slavery, brothers and sisters on the continent were so subjected, whether by official slavery, defacto slavery, or colonialism in general.

Just as there were systematic efforts by Europeans over here to separate us from our languages, systems of spirituality, music and dance, and other aspects of traditional African culture; there were such systematic efforts in Africa, though the forms and specific objectives there often differed from those in play in the so-called "New World."

Whatever their particular institutions, practices, and policies toward us, Europeans here and Europeans in Africa sought to manage and alter African people's minds so that we would de-value ourselves and our African ways and over-value/worship Europeans and their ways. As Europeans gave their Christian preachers missions to "save" our souls, they were really about the business of attempting to convince Africans that our spiritual practices were mere superstition, at best, and that our God(s) was counterfeit, while their religious practices were the only proper and divinely approved practices and their "God" was the only true God.

When Europeans introduced their schools of alleged "education" to us, it was for the purposes of programming us to accept as natural and necessary a social hierarchy in which Europeans were at the top and we were at the bottom, and giving us the kinds of training that would enable us to play the economic, social, and other roles the "authorities"(Europeans) would select for us.

These functions of European religion and schooling were served as they related to us here as they did to Africans in the Mother Land. And many Africans today, both in the U.S. and in Africa and else-

where, suffer from the continuing Europeanizing of our minds. For the most part, Africans of U.S. birth know nothing about the spirituality of our African ancestors in Africa and/or that of Africans there today who have these traditional beliefs and follow the traditional practices. We speak of "God," "Jesus." "Jehovah," and other names for deities that Europeans have injected into our heads. But names of deities from Africa--such as "Ngai," "Oludamare," "Mungu," and so forth--are utterly foreign to most of us here.

While we Africans of U.S. birth are generally ignorant of the traditional systems of spirituality in Africa, many of us who actually care about learning of these systems take it for granted, when we meet a sister or brother from the Mother Land, that she or he can give us information and enlightenment on this matter. But, often, when we ask such a sister or brother for this information and enlightenment, we find ourselves face-to-face with someone who is embarrassed about African spirituality but eager to tell us that "Jesus is my lord and saviour." Yes, the shadow of the Europeans' cross is cast over this land, just as it is over the land of our ancestors.

A crucial aspect of our coming to think of ourselves as "African" is that of independent study, working to counteract the effects upon our consciousness of European-supremacist schooling. As we study historical materials prepared by African scholars who have worked diligently to "correct the record," we learn that our ancestors were actually players on the stage of history, not mere spectators. We want to learn more and figure, when we meet an African who has come to this place from the Mother Land, that he or she will certainly be a source of further information--"Hell, this brother (or sister) is from right there where it all happened."

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FROM OTHER SOURCES

Legislation Introduced in New York to Change Licensing Guidelines Impacts on Ex-prisoners

"New York's licensing guidelines, which presently preclude ex-offenders from obtaining occupational credentials, face revisions if new legislation sponsored by Senator Velmanette Montgomery(D-Brooklyn) and Assemblyman Michael Benjamin(D-Bronx) is signed into law.

"The Montgomery/Benjamin Bill (S.5934-A/A.6179-A) was recently approved by the State Senate and the Assembly and according to a spokesperson for Montgomery, is in route to Governor Pataki for his consideration...

"Essentially, this bill prohibits licensing agencies from disqualifying someone from licensure as a barber or cosmetologist solely on the basis of a criminal conviction. 'Barbering and cosmetology are two of the occupations for which training is offered in prison', Montgomery noted...

"'Inmates in New York correctional facilities are encouraged to participate in and successfully complete vocational/occupational training programs so they may have a chance to compete for real wage jobs when they get out of prison', said Senator Montgomery, who is a member of the Senate Committee on Crime Victims, Crime and Correction.

"Cosmetology training is offered to women incarcerated at Taconic, Bedford Hills and Albion correctional facilities. Barbering training is available to male inmates at Hudson, Green Haven, Auburn and Mid-State correctional facilities..."

-from "Legislation to Lift Ban on Occupational Licensure of Convicted Offenders," page 6, July 13-19 N.Y. AMSTERDAM NEWS(N.Y., N.Y.)

More to Capitol Police Confrontation with Representative Than Meets the Eye

"Georgia Rep. Cynthia McKinney, facing a runoff with County Commissioner Hank Johnson on Aug. 8, is being targeted by out-of-state money being funneled through law enforcement associations dedicated to her defeat. The involvement of the law enforcement associations stems from an altercation in April between a U.S. Capitol policeman and MdKinney...The use of the Capitol Hill cops to 'get McKinney' was the result of a carefully-planned script involving top Republicans who worked in the past for the Capitol Police.

"These include Alexandria's Vice Mayor and retired Capitol policeman Bill Cleveland, an African-American Republican, and Terrance Gainer, the chief of the Capitol Police at the time of the McKinney incident. Gainer, a Republican from Illinois, resigned after he was charged with nepotism for violating police rules in hiring his son-in-law for the police force...

"Gainer has been organizationally linked to a number of influential Catholics in Washington, D.C., who are supportive of white supremacist organizations. These include D.C. Superior Court Judge John H. Bayly and law firms that have represented the Ku Klux Klan...

"One of the organizations that is funneling money to Johnson in the Georgia 4th District is the Federal Criminal Investigators Association(FCIA), which includes the U.S. Capitol Police as a member. One of the directors of the FCIA is tied directly to various neo-confederate and white supremacist causes..."

-from "Police and Press Try to Silence Cynthia McKinney"; pages 1, 6, 8; July 26 SAN FRANCISCO BAY VIEW(San Francisco, CA.)

Scourge of Diabetes Unrelenting in African popula- in U.S.

..."Approximately 2.8 million or 13 percent of all Black people[in U.S.] have diabetes; however, one third of them do not know it. With its complications--blindness, kidney disease, amputations, heart attack and stroke--diabetes is the fifth deadliest disease in the United States. And it has no cure.

"Blacks are twice as likely to have diabetes than non-Hispanic Whites; 25 percent of Black people between the ages of 65 and 74 have diabetes; one in four Black women over 55 years of age has diabetes; and Blacks experience higher rates than Whites of at least four of the serious complications of diabetes: heart disease, blindness, amputation and end stage renal disease(kidney failure).

"Heart disease strikes people with diabetes more than twice as often as it strikes people without diabetes. People with diabetes are five times more likely to suffer strokes, and once having had a stroke, are two to four times as likely to have a recurrence...

"Diabetic retinopathy is a term used for all abnormalities of the small blood vessels of the retina caused by diabetes, such as weakening of blood vessel walls or leakage from blood vessels. Blacks are twice as likely to suffer from diabetes-related blindness.

"Diabetes is the most frequent cause of non-traumatic lower limb amputations. The risk of a leg amputation is 15 to 40 times greater for a person with diabetes. Among people with diabetes, Black people are 1.5 to 2.5 times more likely to suffer from lower limb amputations...

"Ten to 21 percent of all people with diabetes develop kidney disease. Blacks with diabetes are 2.6 to 5.6 times more likely to suffer from kidney disease, with more than 4,000 new cases of end stage renal disease each year.

"Patient education is critical. People with diabetes can reduce their risk for complications if they are educated about their disease, learn and practice the skills necessary to better control their blood glucose levels, and receive regular checkups from their healthcare team..."

-from "Diabetes on the Rise," page 24, July 25 THE FINAL CALL(Chicago, IL.)

Study Finds Higher Incidence of Colon Cancer in Africans of U.S. Birth than Native Africans

"In a paper presented recently at the International Research Conference of the American Institute for Cancer Research(AICR), Dr. Stephen J. O'Keefe of the University of Pittsburgh reported on his AICR-funded research into colon cancer among African-Americans.

"Dr. O'Keefe and his colleagues sought to understand why only 1 in 100,000 Native Africans get colorectal cancer, compared to 1 in 2,000 African-Americans.

"'Our research suggests that higher colon cancer rates seen among African-Americans may be due to diets high in animal protein and fat. There is good experimental evidence to support the hypothesis that such diets encourage specific kinds of intestinal bacteria to flourish. These bacteria produce by-products that injure the cells lining the colon and increase the risk of developing cancer', Dr. O'Keefe said...

"Eating a diet high in animal protein and fat is likely to cause two kinds of gut flora to increase:

-Sulfur-reducing bacteria, whose growth is stimulated by the high sulfur content of meat. These bacteria produce hydrogen sulfide that is toxic to colon cells.

-7-alpha-dehydroxylating bacteria, whose growth is stimulated by bile acids the body synthesizes

in response to fat in the diet. These bacteria convert bile acids into secondary forms which are carcinogenic in experimental models.

"Over time, O'Keefe said, the continued presence of these substances in the gut increases the odds of cancer in cells lining the colon.

"Diets low in meat and fat, and high in carbohydrate, encourage kinds of bacteria to flourish in the gut--methanogenic bacteria that produce non-toxic methane...

"According to government statistics,(the Continuing Survey of Food Intakes by Individuals or CSF II), African Americans eat 77 pounds of beef per per person per year, significantly more than both Hispanic Americans(69 pounds) and Caucasian Americans(65 pounds). African Americans also consume much more pork(63 pounds) per year than Hispanics (45 pounds) and whites(49 pounds)...

"Native Africans, who said they ate a staple diet high in corn meal(carbohydrate) and low in animal meat and fat, had more of the 'good' methanogenic bacteria and Lactobacilliplanatarium, a bacterium that has been shown to help to protect the lining of the colon from the kind of damage that can spark cancer...

"'This study supports the theory that diets high in meat and fat alter colonic flora, encouraging the growth of bacteria that produce a chronic inflammatory condition in the lining of the colon', Dr. O'Keefe said. 'There is increasing experimental evidence that chronic inflammation stimulates mucosal growth and increases the exposure of the rapidly dividing cells lining the gut to other environmental carcinogens'...."

-from "Study Suggests High-Meat Diets Encourage 'Bad' Bacteria in the Gut," page 10, July 20 THE OMAHA STAR(Omaha, NE.)

Sobering News on Economic Conditions Faced by African People, Steps Offered to Achieve Constructive Change

"A recent report by the Heartland Alliance confirms what much of Black America already knows: Black America is in serious trouble economically...

"According to a 2004 study by the Pew Hispanic Trust, between 1996 and 2002, the median net worth of Blacks dropped by 16%. Black net worth declined to a paltry $5,998 per household while the net worth for White households grew by 17% during the same period to $88,651. Twenty percent of Black median net worth was in cash, approximately $1,200, with the balance comprised of home equity.

"'Black families lost 25% of their wealth during the jobless recovery from the recent recession', said Thomas Shapiro, a Brandeis University professor of law and social policy. This means that more Black people are struggling in 2006 with such basic conditions as securing employment, paying rent or a mortgage, paying utilities and insurance, obtaining affordable health coverage, and buying food. Shapiro also stated that only 26% of Black families could survive more than three months after a major income interruption. The other 74% would be forced to seek government assistance, dip deep into savings, sell off assets, relocate with a friend or relative, file bankruptcy, or become homeless...

"Annually, Black Americans generate about $700 billion within the American economy. However, a 2005 report by the Target Market Group shows that we don't use our dollars wisely to improve our plight in America. For example, in 2004, we had collective purchases that included $22 billion for clothes, $10.7 billion for furniture, $28.7 billion for cars, $14 billion for phone service, $3.7 billion for consumer electronics(not computers) and $2.3 billion on alcoholic beverages. Unfortunately, the only area where we showed restraint in our spending was on books where we spent only $257 million, down from $303 million in 2002. We spent more on

our finger nails and our hair, $6.3 billion on personal care, than on books and [other] reading materials...

"Ten Key Solutions for Black Economic Well-Being:

1-Start your own business...By starting your own business, you can hire family, friends, and community members. Additionally, you build the economy of your community...

2-Get as much education as you can. Higher levels of academic and technical education readily translate into better employment, higher income, and more wealth. Education begins with you teaching your children to read well...

3-Stop renting an apartment. Save enough money to make a down payment on a house. Then buy a house. The largest portion of the net worth of most families is in home equity, not cash assets.

4-Open savings accounts for your children. Teach your children the value of money and how to earn, save, and invest it at an early age. Take personal finance classes so that you will become the best teacher for your child on the issues of money, saving, investing, and credit.

5-...invest your money and your time in your skills, your knowledge base, and your self-improvement--not in cars, clothes, furniture, frivolous electronics, sports, games, the lottery, etc...invest your money in the U.S. and global stock markets...

6-Manage your credit carefully and avoid unnecessary debt...Learn to pay cash for what it is you need or don't buy it. And forget about what you want. Create a household budget that includes food, living space, utilities, and live by it...

7-Two-person headed households are more viable economically than one-person headed households. Marriage can be an economic advantage when both parties are aligned on financial priorities and fiscal realities...

8-Create a living strategy that includes good nutrition, plenty of exercise, and proper rest so that you can share your good fortune in a long, healthy life with your family and friends.

9-Tithe. Give to your church or to a social cause.

10-Create a will to pass on your accumulated wealth to the next generation. Studies suggest as much as 70% of most households' current wealth was inherited from a previous generation."

-from "Much of Black America Is Slipping Fast Into Third-World Status," page 19, July 27 THE OMAHA STAR(Omaha, NE.)

COMMENTARY

But much of the time, the brother or sister, like most brothers and sisters of U.S. birth, knows little about our story. As disappointed as we might well be, we should know that, generally speaking, schools in Africa, like schools here, are established on European models and form part of the legacy of colonialism. The British, French, Dutch, and other European colonialists in Africa were no less committed to destroying or crippling Africans' self-awareness and self-esteem than their fellow Europeans over here.

The U.S. of Occupied America is not our country. But we live here. When our sisters and brothers come to this place from Africa, it is our responsibility, as Africans, to act as hosts to our sisters and brothers/our guests. In order to be proper hosts, we should be as educated as possible about African history, cultures, values, etc. and be ready to share what we've learned with our sisters and brothers from across the water. Just as importantly, we should be ready to learn from <u>them</u>. We shouldn't take it for granted that these sisters and brothers know things or don't know things, any

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Iowa/Nebraska Innocence Project(IA/NE IP) is a member of the national Innocence Network. We are an all-volunteer, free-standing, 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, which meets monthly in Omaha, Nebraska. Our mission is to identify and exonerate individuals who are wrongly convicted of crimes in Iowa and Nebraska. The IA/NE IP provides investigative and legal assistance free of charge to inmates, and presently gives priority to cases in which DNA testing may conclusively establish actual innocence. For inmates alleging wrongful convictions in Iowa or Nebraska courts, we begin our screening process by determining whether the inmate is claiming actual innocence, not just mistreatment by the criminal justice system. If an inmate presents a persuasive claim of actual innocence, we carefully review court records to determine whether the inmate's actual innocence claim is provable. In those cases where biological or physical evidence either does not exist or has been destroyed, an inmate's actual innocence claim may not be provable. Screened cases meeting both criteria are assigned to a volunteer legal team, which will represent the inmate in his or her exoneration effort. The Iowa/Nebraska Innocence Project can be reached at (402) 341-7954, or through their website at: http://ianeinnocence.org. The Project is looking for donations of time and money.

The National Council on Crime and Delinquency plans to celebrate its centennial anniversary by convening a summit that will examine ways to help prisoners become productive members of society. The summit is scheduled to be held at Lipton Hall at New York University's School of Law on October 19, 2006, and will address the nation's lack of preparedness to effectively deal with the return of thousands of prisoners to communities throughout the country each year.[Editor's note: Unfortunately, the article from which this announcement was excerpted did not list a web site, telephone number, or address.]

For the first time, American audiences will be able to experience daily African television programming on Aug. 1 with the premiere of The Africa Channel in Washington, D.C. on Comcast Digital Cable Channel 678. Launching over 1,600 hours of original and first-run English-language programming covering news, music, feature films, reality shows, talk and event specials, to soaps, travel, lifestyle and documentaries. The venture is being supported by former UN Ambassador Andrew Young and NBA stars Dikembe Mutombo and Theo Ratliff.

COMMENTARY

more than we should take such for granted with respect to our sisters and brothers from here.

If we do see ourselves as Africans and do look upon other Africans as part of a world-wide family, then we have to deal with Africans, wherever they come from, with respect. Part of this respect has to be a willingness to see ourselves, as Africans of U.S. birth, through the eyes of sisters and brothers who are of African birth. To be more concrete about this, we might imagine that we are African-born and have just arrived here in the States with a longing to meet our long lost sisters and brothers. How much wind would it take out of our sails to meet people who look like us but who value material things more than brotherhood/sisterhood, who speak hatefully toward each other, and who are essentially enslaved to the ways and values of Europeans?

Lastly, as hosts to our sisters and brothers from the Mother Land, we should be a resource for them, helping to guide them through the veritable minefield that this country can be for people of color who come here from across the water with land-of-milk-and-honey illusions about this place.

-Editor

BACK IN TIME

In Africa, before the fifteenth century, the predominant principle of social relations was that of family and kinship associated with communalism. Every member of an African society had his position defined in terms of relatives on his mother's side and on his father's side. Some societies placed greater importance on matrilineal ties and others on patrilineal ties. Those things were crucial to the daily existence of a member of an African society, because land (the major means of production) was owned by groups such as the family or clan--the head of which were parents of those yet unborn. In theory, this pattern was explained by saying that the residents in any community were all direct descendants of the first person who settled the land. When a new group arrived, they often made a pretense that they too had ancestry dating back to the settling of the land or else they insured that members of the earliest kin groups continued to perform the ceremonies related to the land and water of the region.

Similarly, the labor that worked the land was generally recruited on a family basis. A single family or household would till its own plots and would also be available to share certain joint farming activities with other members of the extended family or clan. Annual hunts and river fishing were also organized by a whole extended family or village community. In a matrilineal society such as that of the Bemba (Zambia), the bridegroom spent a number of years working for the father of his bride; and many young men who had married daughters of the same household often formed work teams to help each other. In Dahomey, a young man did not go to live with his wife's family, but the 'dokpwe', or work team, allowed a son to participate in carrying out a task of some magnitude for the father of his wife. In both of those examples, the right of the father-in-law to acquire labor and obligations

of the son-in-law to give labor were based on kinship. This can be contrasted with capitalism where money buys labor, and with feudalism where the serf provides labor in order to have access to a portion of land which belongs to the landlord.

Having been produced on land that was family property and through family labor, the resultant crops and other goods were distributed on the basis of kinship ties. If a man's crops were destroyed by some sudden calamity, relatives in his own village helped him. If the whole community was in distress, people moved to live with their kinsmen in another area where food was not scarce. In Akan country (Ghana), the clan system was highly organized, so that a man from Brong could visit Fante many hundreds of miles away and receive food and hospitality from a complete stranger who happened to be of his own clan...

In all African societies during the early epoch, the individual at every stage of life had a series of duties and obligations to others in the society as well as a set of rights: namely, things that he or she could expect or demand from other individuals. Age was a most important factor determining the extent of rights and obligations. The oldest members of the society were highly respected and usually in authority; and the idea of seniority through age was reflected in the presence of age-grades and age-sets in a great many African societies. Circumcision meant initiation into the society and into adulthood. From that moment, a man was placed with others in his own age-group and a woman likewise. Usually, there were at least three age-grades, corresponding roughly to the young, the middle-aged, and the old.

Source: HOW EUROPE UNDERDEVELOPED AFRICA by Walter Rodney

"As African men, we commit ourselves to respecting ourselves and each other; to respecting African women; and to respecting our children and youth, and giving them proper guidance."

HARAMBEE AFRIKAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION CREED

Together we seek to know that which is us, to expand our collective consciousness of who we are and whence we come. We exalt in the fact that Africans are beautiful in our own right, rather than at the expense of any other group of people. And in the true spirit of the Swahili word, "harambee," we promote the idea that cultural awareness is germane to human growth.

NGUZO SABA

Umoja - Unity
Kujichagulia - Self-determination
Ujima - Collective Work and Responsibility
Ujamaa - Cooperative Economics
Nia - Purpose
Kuumba - Creativity
Imani - Faith

HARAMBEE AFRIKAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

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HARAMBEE FLAME Editor

Wopashitwe Mondo Eyen we Langa